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C H A R A C T E R

OF THE LATE REVEREND AND AGED

D<sup>R</sup>. N I C H O L L S,

Vicar of St. GILES'S CRIPPLEGATE, and Rector of  
ST. LUKE'S, OLD STREET;

DELIVERED AS A

F U N E R A L - O R A T I O N,

In the Parish Church of *St. Luke*, in *Old Street*,

On S U N D A Y, *December* 11, 1774,

By the Revd. J. S M I T H, M. A.

CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY.

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L O N D O N :

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M.DCC.LXXIV.

*W. Mayne.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

*THIS* Sermon, or Funeral - Oration, was  
penned with the strictest Adherence to  
Truth, and in real Gratitude to the Deceased.  
It was not intended for Publication by the Wri-  
ter, but comes into the World at the Request  
of many who heard it delivered, and under the  
Sanction of several Clergymen of known Abilities  
and Station.



TO

THE RESPECTABLE INHABITANTS

OF

ST. LUKE'S, IN OLD-STREET, MIDDLESEX;

THIS SERMON,

OR FUNERAL-ORATION,

IS,

(WITH ALL DUE REGARD)

INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR OBLIGED

AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,

JAMES SMITH.



192

THE RESPECTABLE FURNITURE

OF

ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL, MEDICAL

THE HOSPITAL, MEDICAL



(WITH A LIST OF THE

OF THE HOSPITAL, MEDICAL

THE HOSPITAL, MEDICAL



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R E V. ii. 10. L. P.

BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, AND I WILL  
GIVE THEE THE CROWN OF LIFE.

**I**T is appointed unto all Men once to die  
says the great Preacher St. Paul : It is ap-  
pointed unto all Men once to die says Nature  
herself, even without the Help of sacred  
Writ to prove either the Origin, or the Cer-  
tainty of Death.

It would be difficult for us at present to  
forget this great Truth, since the Providence  
of God has afforded us a Proof so recent and

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so convincing. The fable Furniture with which this Pulpit is so solemnly adorned, reminds you, stronger even than Language itself, of the Departure of a venerable and amiable Pastor, whose Remains were so lately deposited, with becoming Honours, in the Mother Church. You, I know, with the neighbouring Flock, are now willing to regret your mutual Loss. Neither Sanctity of Character, nor Quality of Heart ; of a Heart beneficent, just, religious, an Enemy to Artifice and Dissimulation — nothing had Power to ward off the fatal Blow, nor to save, even so good a Man, from the Corruption of the Grave. But when you come to hear particularly recited, how innocently, and yet how usefully he lived, and how peacefully and triumphantly he died ; at the same Time that

2 you

you congratulate him as an Angel of God, you will, I am sure, redouble your Concern for the Loss of him as a Pastor and a Friend.

As I only mean to speak of the useful Part of this good Man's Life, I shall at once bring him to *Magdalen College, Cambridge*, where he was educated, and where he arrived at the honourable Stations of Tutor and President. How well he was beloved and respected at College, his very singular Invitation to the Living of *St. Giles Cripplegate*, will pleasingly and sufficiently explain. In the year 1729, his Predecessor Dr. *Bennet* died, and left his Parishioners (as indeed they had ever been whilst the Doctor was Vicar) in a State of ecclesiastical Faction — too disagreeable and too inflammatory to be here recited. Bishop



*Eyre* (who was then Dean of *St. Paul's*) wrote a Letter (much, I think, to his Honour) to Doctor *Waterland*, Master of *Magdalen College*, in these Words :

‘ My dear Friend,  
‘ **I**F you know a Man in your University, of  
‘ a moderate Share of Learning — and of  
‘ a Temper or Disposition which nothing can  
‘ ruffle — you will make me easy and happy  
‘ in recommending him to me for the Vicarage  
‘ of *St. Giles Cripplegate*.’

Doctor *Waterland* replied :

‘ My good Lord Bishop,  
‘ **I** Do not through Partiality to Mr. *Nicholls*,  
‘ as my President, recommend him to  
‘ your Lordship — but because throughout  
‘ the

‘ the whole Univerſity, or in the whole  
 ‘ World, I do not know a Man ſo proper for  
 ‘ the Living of *St. Giles Cripplegate*, or ſo  
 ‘ likely to reſtore Peace and good Neighbour-  
 ‘ hood in that populous and diſtracted  
 ‘ Pariſh.’

This honourable Invitation being given to Mr. *Nicholls*, he, with a Diffidence very natural to him, begged Leave to decline ſo arduous an Undertaking. However, he was prevailed upon to make Experiment; and Conſequences proved how well his Friend knew him: For through a Strength of Judgment and Sweetneſs of Diſpoſition which he poſſeſſed, Rage and Faction amongſt the Pariſhioners were, in a very ſhort Time, happily converted into Peace and Unanimity,  
 And

And this State of parochial Harmony has continued from that Period to the present Hour. Once indeed it was likely somewhat to be broken in upon, tho' it is evident that both Parties meant equally well \*. The Circumstance which I allude to grieved the aged Mind of the Deceased not a little: He had been near Forty Years amongst you in a State of pastoral Love and Friendship; and he was concerned to find that any of you should be displeased with him at the Close of

\* The Reader will observe, that on the Death of the late Clerk of *St. Luke's*, about Two Years ago, Doctor *Nicholls* appointed the Clerk of *St. Giles Cripplegate*, to be Clerk of *St. Luke's*, and placed his Son in his Stead at *St. Giles's Cripplegate*; which gave Offence to some of the Parishioners of *St. Luke's*, who thought that so good a Man as Doctor *Nicholls* might have been induced to have proved a Friend, upon this Occasion, to a Parishioner of *St. Luke's*, who was a Candidate for his Favours, and well recommended.



so long a Life, for shewing (what struck him no more than as a Duty) a partial Attention to those of his own Household. But this happened at a Time and upon an Occasion, both, I trust, now equally forgotten.

His Parishioners in general were always a pleasing Topic of Conversation to him, especially where their Interest or their Happiness was concerned. It was in his Power, with Respect to temporal Matters, *really* to *serve* but few of you, and sometimes, perhaps, he might neglect to do even this : Yet if he did ever neglect to serve an Individual, it was painful to him, and done only from a Fear of disobliging many. Altho' in a few Years after his Residence at *Cripplegate*, this Parish was taken out of *St. Giles's*, yet he always considered

considered you, and wished you to consider yourselves, as one People: As there was but one Shepherd, so he studied to make you but one Flock. He carried himself towards both Parishes with the strictest Impartiality; and I believe that ever since the Consecration of this Church in the Year 1733, he made it a religious Scruple to officiate here and at *St. Giles's* alternately. In a Word, you were his first parochial Care, and you were his last: He avoided, he rejected every other Charge: He lived, he died amongst you; and might be justly said with *Job*, to drop into his Grave peaceably, being old and full of Days.

To speak of him as a Divine, he was sound and orthodox: He lived in the Obedience of  
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the Church, and held fast the Profession of his Faith without wavering. In his Voice and Manner of Preaching, there was, perhaps, nothing very striking: Yet his Voice was strong and audible, and his Manner wholly free from Affectation. As to the Matter of his Discourses, it was altogether such as he believed and practised, and expressed in Language neither so sublime as to be above, nor yet so abject as to be below, the Capacities of the Generality of his Hearers. He did not appear pedantic or careless, by falling into the one Extreme; nor did he degrade or give Offence, by falling into the other. He preached Christianity as a practical Thing; as intended to make us better Men, and to qualify us for a better World. I think that you may, with great Justice, suppose him appealing

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ing to you from the Grave in these striking Words of the Apostle:—" Ye are Witnesses, " and God also, how holily and justly, and " unblameably we behaved ourselves amongst " you ; as ye know how we exhorted and " comforted, and charged every one of you, " that ye would walk worthy of God, who " hath called you to his Kingdom and " Glory."

But his Endeavours to serve the Interest of pure, rational Religion, were by no Means confined to the Pulpit : He equally recommended it by his Behaviour out of it. Within these few Years indeed he mixed but little with the World ; nor is this to be wondered at, particular Family Circumstances considered : But I have been informed by some of his

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old Friends, and I myself think the same (tho' I knew him only when the World could not possibly afford him many Charms) that his Conversation had always something in it sprightly and entertaining; and he had the happy Art of introducing, on proper Occasions, Subjects serious and instructive: Nay, he would sometimes warn and reprove too; but then it was done in so inoffensive, so delicate, so pleasing a Manner — that the Person warned or reproved could scarcely avoid recollecting himself, or thanking and respecting his kind and disinterested Monitor and Friend. He was allowed by all who knew him to be remarkably temperate in his Mode of Living — and in his freest Hours, when he mostly gave Way to Mirth and Good-humour, he

never lost Sight of the Christian, or the Clergyman.

In his domestic Character he was great and exalted ; but for Reasons, which you will easily suggest, and I am sure as readily approve, I shall comprehend the Whole of it in saying, that he was a kind and gentle Master, a tender and an affectionate Husband, a fond and an indulgent Father.

As a Friend I know not how to describe him justly. I have had such Intelligence of his Sincerity and Integrity, as does the greatest Honour to Friendship and Human Nature. For his Beneficence also he was remarkable ; not more for the Value of the Gift, than  
for



for the christian, graceful Manner of conferring it. To do good in Secret was a favourite Sentiment of his, and which I am convinced he reduced to frequent Practice. Some have accused him of a Tendency even to Avarice; but surely they were mistaken. The moderate Share of Substance which he has left behind him, proves this Opinion to be false and ill-grounded. He has only made a Reserve of Fortune (becoming so just and so good a Man) for the promoting of the Protestant Religion in Foreign Parts, and of Christian Knowledge in this Kingdom — for the Benefit of poor Clergymen's Widows — for his near and amiable Relations — for his faithful Domestics — and a few, whom he thought, deserving Friends.

And

And here it would be the highest Ingratitude in me to pass over in Silence and unacknowledged his singular Regard for, and Kindness towards myself; not only in appointing me to represent him in this Pulpit (where his growing Infirmities would no longer permit him to appear) but in his warmest Wishes so often and so tenderly expressed, that after his Decease I might succeed him in the Living. Happy should I be to remain in a Place so suitable to my Inclinations, and amongst those, from whom I have received such flattering Attention, and Wishes so kindly corroborating with those of the Deceased. More than once, when he was speaking upon this Subject, have I seen the Tears trickling down his aged Cheeks, which, as they shewed a Sensibility honourable to  
human

human Nature, proclaimed him also the resigned Christian, and the real Friend. How few have Fortitude enough to speak, even to their natural Heirs, upon the Subject of Inheritance ! but from the Innocency of this Man's Life, the very Form of Death was changed before him ; and allowing somewhat for human Tendernefs and juft human Feelings, he looked over the King of Terrors, feeing the King of Glory fo near.

And now I am naturally brought to undraw the Curtains of his Death-bed. There was nothing in the Scene to fhock or affright — all was calm and at Peace within and without. His Illnefs, tho' fomewhat lingering, was never painful. Stricken with the Rod of Time, he plainly faw the Tomb yawning.



yawning to devour him, and he was ready to step into this devouring Grave. Not that he, as a good Christian, was weary of Life, but that Nature cried — it is Time that he had Rest. He was conscious that he had made a real Blessing of a long Life. He did not enter upon Old-age without being defended against its Inconveniencies. He had far exceeded his threescore Years and ten; but altho' he had necessarily lost that Strength of Constitution natural to younger Life — yet he never found (in Consequence of his own Actions however) that such Strength was succeeded by Labour and Sorrow: And tho' all his Years, many as they were, appeared to him (now) as short and as transitory as a Watch in the Night, yet was it no displeasing Reflection to him, that we so soon pass away  
and

and are gone. We will therefore here suppose this venerable and Christian Pastor to expire — to expire with all the Prospects of the happiest Immortality. He was indeed a good and a consistent Character — he was (to speak of a private Clergyman) one of the brightest Ornaments which the Church can boast of. He set out with and practised throughout Life — only one Set of laudable and well-grounded Principles ; Principles which enabled him to maintain a Christian Fidelity unto Death, and so to finish even so long a Course with Joy. We have no Need therefore to grieve for him — and yet the tender Tribute of a Tear he would approve and thank us for. His Memory, I doubt not, will be ever pleasing to all ; and to some of us it must be for ever dear : But whenever we miss him as a

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Pastor

Pastor or a Friend — whenever we regret the Departure of so good a Man from a World where such a Man is so seldom to be found — let us (upon his Account) consider him as adding one more Member to the glorious Multitude of just Men made perfect, whose Names are recorded in the Book of Life, and who are numbered amongst those who enjoy Life everlasting.

From a Review so just and pleasing, and yet so affecting to our Tendernefs — what are your Thoughts of Death and Eternity? I am willing to suppose myself (on this Occasion in particular) speaking only to such as feel within them (from their general Conduct in Life) the Approbation of their God — and are desirous to look forward with Satisfaction towards



that happy Time, “when Death shall be swallowed up in Victory.” And yet, perhaps, with all your Christian Faith and Christian Conduct, even the best of you may sometimes find yourselves dismayed and terrified at the Thought of your own Diffolution. “Dust,” however, “thou art, and unto Dust” must every one of you return. Yet this Dust is to be reunited — every Body is to rise again. Reflect likewise “upon your many unavoidable “Disappointments in Life — upon your with-  
 “ered Joys and blasted Hopes. Look upon  
 “the Graves which have swallowed up your  
 “nearest Friends and most valuable Acquaintance” — upon that Grave especially, which has so lately proved to us, that Death (after how long soever a Respite) will, at length, renew his Conquest upon the most useful and the most worthy. I am not here even

wishing to destroy a natural Fear, or a natural, Tendernefs, refpecting this moft awful Change. Our deceafed Friend, nay our Lord himfelf, fubmitted to the Exercife of it: “ If it be  
 “ poffible remove this Cup from me.” Confine yourfelves to Nature only, and you will never do amifs : Struggles like thefe will never hinder you from recollecting yourfelves in Time : Human Senfibility and Chriftian Refignation form a pleafing and a confiftent Union ; “ Nevertheless,” adds our Lord, “ not  
 “ my Will but thine be done.” Neither our Fortitude nor our Fidelity is, in this Cafe, impaired or impeached. We ftill die the Death of the righteous, and our latter End is ftill like his.

It is my fincereft Wifh then, that whoever fucceeds your late beft of Rectors, and my beft  
 of

of Friends — may be possessed of the same sweet and peaceable Disposition as he was — think of Religion, and practise it, as he did — be without Artifice and without Hypocrisy, as he was — take an equal Care of a respected Flock as he did, and leave you with an equal Degree of Honour and Esteem. And above all, for his own Sake — may he endeavour to live and die like that righteous Man — shew an equal Fidelity even unto Death, and so receive a Crown of Life equally bright and glorious !

And may you in return do your Parts !  
 May you be ever ready to make such a Rector  
 as happy amongst you as you did your last !  
 May you diligently and profitably attend his  
 Preaching ! May you ever study Peace and  
 good



good Neighbourhood amongst yourselves, and ever act an honest and ingenuous, a kind and benevolent Part to Mankind in general! May you ever shew such Principles and such Conduct, both in religious and civil Matters, as bespeak you the good Flock of a good Shepherd! And lastly, for your own Sakes only—may you learn to live and die like him, whose Virtues we have been so faithfully describing! You cannot have a better Example—you need not be better Christians—you need not shew a greater Fidelity unto Death in Things lovely and of good Report—neither may you wish for a better Crown of Life, than that which he is now doubtless in quiet and eternal Possession of. O happy Event this, whenever it happeneth to any one of us!—God grant that, at his own appointed Time,  
it

it may happen to All, through our own best Endeavours, perfected by the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord! — to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit — be ascribed all Honour and Glory, World without End. AMEN.

F I N I S.

it may happen to All, through our own best-  
 Endeavour, protected by the Merits and Sac-  
 rificion of Jesus Christ our Lord! — to whom,  
 with the Father and the Holy Spirit — be  
 ascribed all Honour, Glory, Wealth without  
 End. Amen.





